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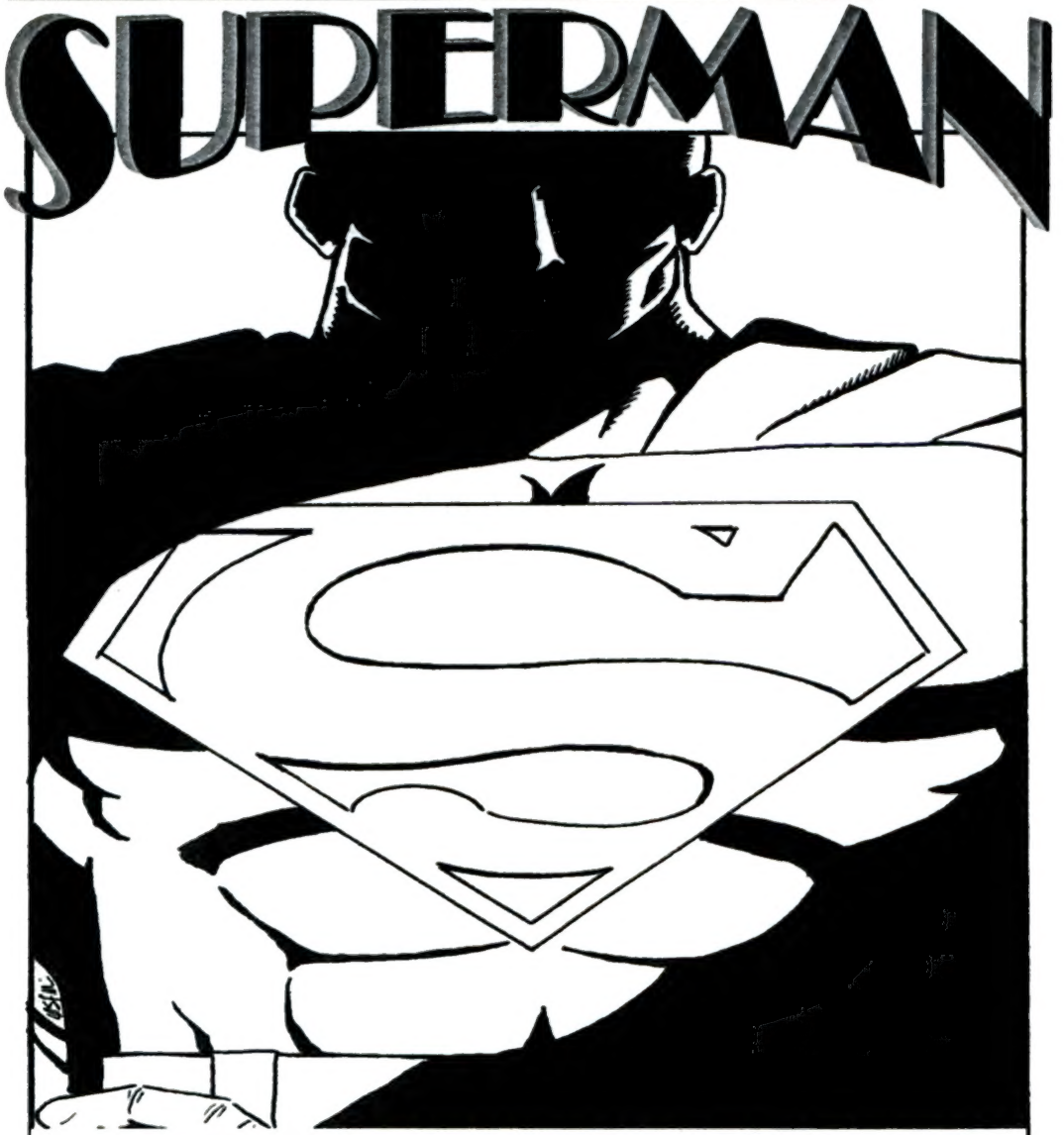
Celebrating Comics' Fantastic Fan Scene!



SUPERMAN © and ® DC Comics / artwork by David Ellis 2005

YE GOOD OLE EDITOR'S PAGE

Welcome back to some and welcome to our first timers to the second digest sized Fantastic Fanzine. Our crisis countdown continues and in this issue (-2) we spotlight the guy who started it all Superman! This issue's cover is by David Ellis along with articles from Stuart Kerr, Rob Thomas, the Snoop and yours truly.

Our first issue was well received at local stores listed on our back cover. Lots of good feedback a few "where the heck have you guys been?" and good wishes all around. Our 100 issue print run was gone quickly with only a few left for shows and file copies. I hope to increase image area and unify the font type we'll be using in the next issue to have a more streamline style. Lot's of feedback on the Snoops return.

Remember to log on our web site at ARROWCOMICS.COM and go to the Fantastic Fanzine forum section and leave feedback there as well. I'm still looking for more fans to get involved. We need some local artist and writers to help turn this zine out. Here's your chance to get published. If you do not want to mail in anything just leave it on the site and I'll try to squeeze it in. Right now we are looking for local people with that special edge or style.

Our next issue will feature our favorite web head, Spiderman! The deadline for that issues content will be Sept. 24th, so get crackin'. Also if you know of any local shops who might want to carry this mag drop me a phone number of the store and I'll give them a call. Thanks and I'll see ya next issue.

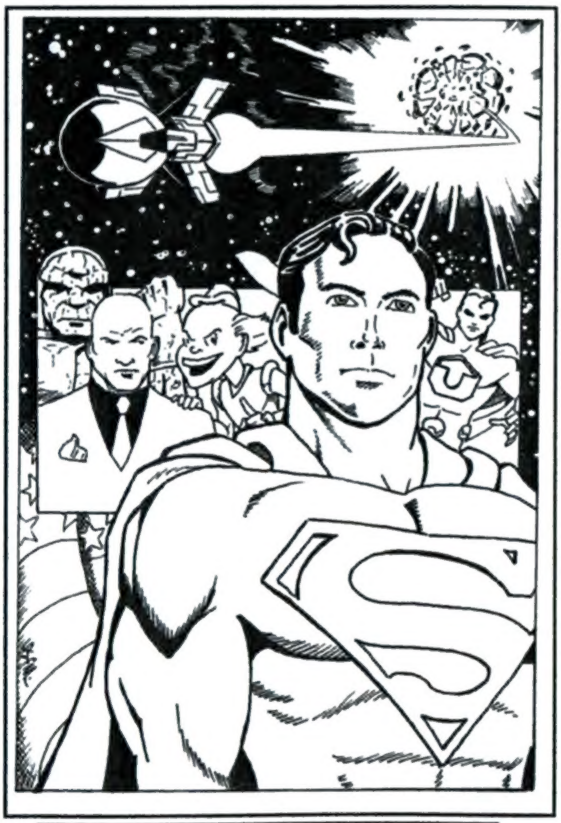


illustration by Dvid Ellis 2005

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The SNOOP'S

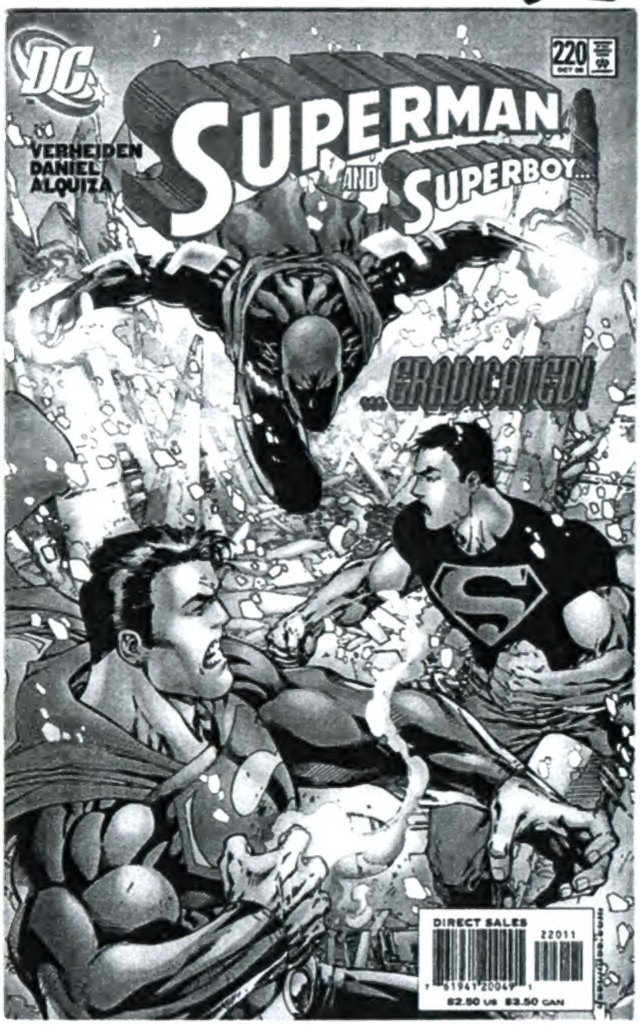
Headlines and Views on the latest comic news!!!

Promises, Promises. Marvel Comics has been the subject of a class action lawsuit from retailer Brian Hibbs over the return policies of the comic publishing giant. According to Hibbs, Marvel refused to accept returns on books that either shipped late (more than 30 days past their announced release dates) or with significant creative team or content changes. The Snoop has heard such complaints from local retailers, too. Hey, Marvel, you're the big dogs. You oughtta be taking the high road, not pawning off your product on retailers who are usually just scraping by. Apparently, the suit is near settlement and Marvel will soon be issuing credit vouchers to retailers who were stuck with books they couldn't sell. No cash? Well, I guess the retailers will be buying more Marvel books with those credit vouchers. Who won this suit again?

Quills for some sharp books. The Quill is a new award from booksellers and librarians pointing out excellence in writing and publishing. The Quill Awards will be televised on NBC on October 22, 2005. Comic book fans will be happy to note the graphic novel category. Graphic novels have been around for years, particularly since the late 1980's, and they are finally getting some recognition outside of the comic book marketplace. Of course, they've come a long way since publishers were just collecting and repackaging previously released material. Graphic novels cover a wide range of styles and genres and are quite often completely new material. Some of the nominees for the new award are...Jeff Smith's massive graphic novel **Bone: One**. Over 1300 pages and 13 years in the making, Bone recently garnered two of this year's major comic book industry awards for best graphic novel, The Harvey Award and The Eisner; **American Splendor: Our Movie Year** by Harvey Pekar; **In the Shadow of No Towers** by Art Spiegelman; **Marvel 1602 Volume 1** by Neil Gaiman, Andy Kubert, Richard Isanove; and **Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return** by Marjane Satrapi.

Movie News. Hot on the heels of the **Sin City** DVD release comes news that Danny Trejo has confirmed he will take part in the filming of "A Dame To Kill For" in the sequel, but does not know which role yet since director Rodriguez hasn't finalized the script. Is Jessica Alba too hot for the **Fantastic Four 2?** The New York Post has reported that the actress may not be seen in Fantastic Four 2, and not because she's invisible. She might rather reprise Barbara Eden's role in the remake of **I Dream of Jeannie** with Saturday Night Live alum Jimmy Fallon. The new animated **Spawn** project is fairly teeming with star-powered voice talent, including Keith David returning as the title character, along with Michael Jai White, Carl Weathers, Bruce Boxleitner, and Mark Hamill.

COMIC REVIEWS



SUPERMAN #220

Writer: Mark Verheiden

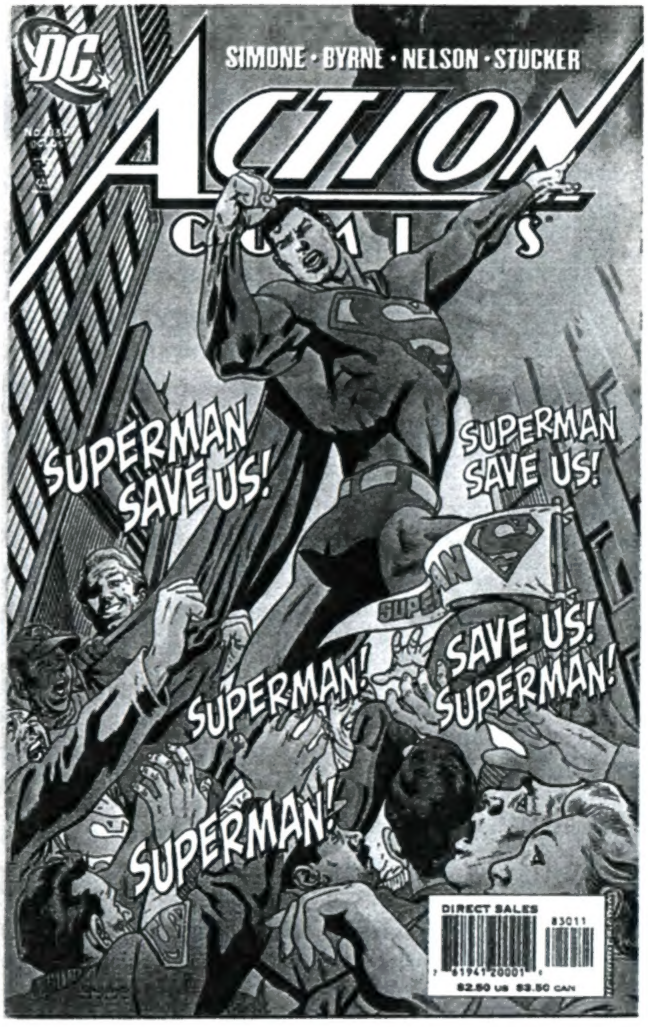
Artist: Tony Daniel / Inks: Marlo Alquiza

First I'll admit I was never the big Supes fan. Too Strong and too many powers...blah, blah, blah, but since I got no one else to submit a review well, I rushed out to my local shop and picked up copies of Superman and Action Comics and got down to reading them for the first time in over ten years...gulp.

Our story opens with John Henry (Steel, if I remember correctly) viewing a demolished Fortress of Solitude. Then over to Smallville where we find Superboy helping out on the Kent farm. While Conner is contemplating his future and his origins, Superman, in his Clark Kent persona drops by and they both get down to a little pity party. Meanwhile John finds that the Eradicator is still alive and a little pissed off. So thanks to a little warning from the handy dandy JLA emergency distress signal, the pity party ends and it's Superman and Superboy off to the rescue. Some fisticuffs insue and before you know it our heroes are buried under a huge mountain of rock and ice. While our heroes are buried, the Omac Project armor appears and takes out the Eradicator in one blow. Supes and pal free themselves and get the lowdown from John on what he'd seen. Everyone wonders what is going to happen next...pom...pom...pom.

The art was serviceable and didn't distract from the story. Although seven splash type pages made me wonder about how much they were needed. This wasn't my idea of a Superman story for those looking to enter back into the

mythos of the man of steel and to be honest I doubt I'll be getting another one. With the price of comics these days there is just not enough here to justify putting this superman title in my pull list. Regular readers might find this one good, but for me, I'll grade it a D plus.



ACTION COMICS #830 Wow!!! That's a *huge* number!!!

Writer: Gail Simone

Artist: John Byrne / Inks: Lary Stucker and Nelson?

A nice beginning set up with Dr. Psycho, at first I didn't know who he was but then with the "He's a fine young man. Wonder how he will die?" line the creepiness set in. Then we are wisked away to the bedroom of Clark and Lois for a two page lovey dovey scene, that I know some fans dig but I just yawn. Guess who happens to drop by Metropolis? Why it's the villain Shrapnel. Too bad Supes is also on the scene. But before the man of steel can make light work of the jobber, Dr. Psycho, to Lex Luther's chagrin, whips up some distractions that seemingly allow Shrapnel to escape. Once a dispatched Black Atom arrives to tone down the good doctor, Supes recovers to put our jobber out of action. As Psycho and Adam talk about getting out of dodge, why, good ol' supes drop in from above with the ol' "Do you really think I don't know who flies over my city at all times?" setting up for an interesting showdown next issue.

The art by Byrne was top notch and his layouts were a step above his usual. Even though I'm not the biggest Superman fan this issue will get me to pick up the next one just to get the slugfest between Supes and Black Adam. This ought to be good. I'll have to give this one a solid B.

SUPERMAN:
The Man, The Myth, The Legend

by Stuart Kerr

The very first comic I can remember reading was an issue of Superman around 1965. I don't know what number it was, but I do remember Superman fashioning a solar-system-sized chain, hooking a long string of planets (*planets!*) together, and towing them all away from a star that was about to go supernova. It was one of many I pulled out of a box from the collection belonging to my older brother Robert. He's got twelve years on me, so when he was buying comics, he was pulling Fantastic Four #1 off the newsstand shelf. I'm not sure whatever happened to those boxes of books. I think they were left behind when we moved from Peterborough to Windsor. Amazing Fantasy #15 was in there. Avengers #1 was in there. Ah, well...such is life.

Ever since those first peeks I snuck at my brother's comics, at a time when I could barely read, Superman has been sort of an icon for me. He could do anything! Nowadays those sorts of exploits would be considered simplistic if not outright childish. I mean, can you imagine the devestating effects on a planet that is heaved out of its orbit by a chain slung over some god's shoulder? Last year's tsunami was caused by a minor (in geological terms) bumping and grinding of two tectonic plates. The Man of Steel would have been responsible for extinction level events on the dozens of planets he was trying so foolishly to save. I have a different view of comics at 44 than I did at five, of course, but I do still have the memories of that scene and thinking it was so cool.

Regardless of the current crop of superhero movies putting Spiderman and Batman at the top of the comic book character list, does anyone out there think that Superman *isn't* the most famous superhero of all time? Is it because he was the first costumed hero? No, Supes lost out on that distintion by mere months to the Phantom. Superman, created by two young guys from Ohio, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, was less a character than an archtype. He was the super-man. He was the Freudian ego's ideal — the man-god. His tale was mythic in size, epic in proportion. Superman is the rival and peer of Gilgamesh, Moses, Hercules and Ullyses. His story was written by the Fates and deals with Destiny.

From a tragic beginning, the hero was born. His father (since we're thinking Freud here) and his homeworld were destroyed shortly after his birth.

He was cast into the waters of space and into the hands of fate. He was found by kindly shepherd-farmers (the Kents) who raised and befriended the infant, the Chosen One. The boy grows to manhood, filled with the ideals of Truth and Justice by his wise but simple foster parents. Finally, he discovers the his own truth, his own identity, and moves into the larger world as The Hero.

Joe and Jerry weren't the only ones who had thoughts of a super-man. A dark and twisted version was imagined in the mind of an Austrian named Adolph Hitler, who envisioned a master race of uber-men ruling the world. We know how that idea turned out. Fortunately for us, Superman fights for Liberty and the American way.

Siegel and Shuster tried to sell their idea to a newspaper as a comic strip, to no avail. The story goes that M.C.Gaines (E.C. Comics, Mad Magazine) turned DC Comics publisher Harry Donenfeld on to their character and in 1938 Action Comics #1 appeared and garnered such success that by 1939 he starred in both Action Comics as well as the new, self-titled Superman comic. He also began appearing in his own newspaper strip.

George Reeves and Noel Neill of the Superman television show.

The 1940's and 50's were a boom time for Kal-El of Krypton. 1940 saw the debut of an enormously popular radio show. In 1941, the first of 17 critically acclaimed Max Fleischer animated cartoons appeared. Live action Superman serials began in 1948. Then, from 1951 to 1957, the 104 episodes of the Superman television show aired, starring George Reeves. Superman was a household name.

I'll admit that when I came back to comics in the mid-1970's I was one of the Marvel zombies. I didn't read much of the DC stuff, including Superman, though I did watch with some glee the three Christopher Reeve movies. Well, the first two anyway. Although I liked superheroes because they were, well, super, Superman was just too much so. There wasn't much he couldn't do. It often seemed contrived finding a way to make it seem that the Big Red S faced some difficulty, I never thought of him as being in any kind of personal danger. Although I had a ball with the Superman – Spiderman crossover book, that was pretty contrived as well.

I applauded guiltily the John Byrne make-over in the late 1980's when some limits to the character were introduced. Part of me cried, "Blasphemy!" while another part just nodded my head. It had to be done. All of those old

(Continued on page 11)

Superman: The Animated Series Volume One

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I was elated to get this puppy in my mitts upon its release earlier this year having been a fan since it originally aired back in 1996. Bruce Timm, Paul Dini and their wonderful creative team hit pay dirt once again with this series, coming off high from that nutty guy with the pointy ears and all the gadgets, you know...Batman. While a lot of fans wondered if Superman could match the quality of Batman: The Animated series all doubts were laid to rest once the series kicked into high gear.

First hitting the airwaves with a Friday night movie (separated into 3 episodes for this collection) in September of 1996 retelling Superman's origin the series was met with resounding praise. The production team had managed to not only make it easy for a new generation to get into the man of steel but also appease the previous ones by handling everything with the utmost respect and care. Perhaps the biggest adjustment was Brainiac hailing from Krypton as well, and being responsible for the deaths of millions of Kryptonians. It worked and in my opinion made Braniac a more meaningful character in Superman's universe.

It's a hard task to discuss Superman: The Animated Series without mentioning its big brother, Batman T.A.S., and the differences between the two. To sum it up it's simply a matter of night and day. Gotham was perfectly dark and ominous in its design, while Metropolis was bright and colorful with an almost futuristic edge. There are plenty of times though where the creative teams' pedigree shines through in Superman T.A.S. but for the most part it is action on

a cosmic scale and even some life on the farm.

Some highlights of the first season, 18 episodes in all, are great guest appearances by Lobo, The Flash and even Jack 'King' Kirby. Really. Lobo had to be toned down of course for his Saturday morning debut but his trashy personality still shined through. A real treat was getting to see the classic tale of the world's greatest race retold. I won't spoil it for you by telling who won, but we all know The Flash is a fast lil' devil.

Villains, we all love them, and there are some great ones in this collection. Lex Luthor, Toyman, and my personal favorite, and one of many nods to Jack Kirby and his unfinished Fourth World epic in the series, Darkseid. Superman is not all-powerful in this series and of course his deadliest Achilles heel makes its appearance; Kryptonite. Oh yeh, Lois Lane is in there too! Really though the chemistry between Lois and Clark is a highlight of the series. This is the ruthless Lois Lane always out to get the scoop and taking Clark all too lightly. Numerous times throughout the series he jokingly tells her he is Superman through sly comments and offhand remarks. She barely takes notice.

If the eighteen episodes included in this collection aren't enough for you (you must be insane) there's a gaggle of swell extras to be had. There is commentary on four of the more important episodes (someone really loves Mr. Mxyzptlk) , pop-up trivia and 2 featurettes. The best of these special features is Superman: Learning to Fly, in which we get a first hand view of the creation of the series.

I can't recommend this first volume highly enough. If you love Superman, or superheroes in general, this is a no brainer. This is animated storytelling at its finest with the spirit of the classic Fleischer serials (if you haven't seen these get to it!) running through its veins. Bring on volume two!

R. Thomas

Illustration by Rob Thomas 2005

Local Fan Spotlight!!!

It's early Tuesday afternoon when I pull into The Pack Shack at 23565 Van Born Rd. in Taylor MI. Phone # (313) 299-0550 . As I walk around the corner from the parking area my eyes dart to the larger than life painting of Superman in the window by store manager David Flynn. The picture shown here does not truly illustrate the workmanship put into it.

As one of Detroit's longest running operations it boasts well over 100 long boxes of back issues along with a large selection of figures and toys. Also noted is their wide display of gaming supplies (a blast for D&D players) and array of trading cards. The Shack's manager David greets his customers with a smile and his knowledge of our comic industry is extensive. If you have a question, odds are he knows the answer. All of your new comic purchases come with a bag and board which is great for us fans on a tight budget. On weekends the shop plays host to "Name Your Game" sessions, where fans get to run various games of their choice. This is a chance for people to experience new and old games of all types. A large playing area is set up near the rear of the store for the events.

According to David the top selling books in his store are Ultimate Spiderman, Ant from Image, Superman & Batman, although it seems all the Bat titles are doing very well as are a majority of his horror titles. He did comment on the fact most of his independent titles are suffering, perhaps due to late or discontinued titles the fans may be willing to try but are frustrated at publishers inability to get out.

Store manager David Flynn

Some of David's favorite titles include Strangers In Paradise and Supreme Power. However he feels a lot of us are missing out on the collected volumes of Modesty Blaze put out from Titan Books. The craftsmanship put into these daily collected strips is amazing when you think about how long these features were published.

This is one of my favorite places to pop in and talk comics. Check it out !!!

Comic Contacts

* Big Ben's Comics	8241 Allen Rd.	Allen Park	(313) 382-0700
* Comics Rox Collectibles	19190 Eureka Rd	Southgate	(734) 324-3160
* Green Brain Comics	13210 Michigan Ave.	Dearborn	(313) 582-9444
* Pack Shack	23565 Van Born Rd.	Taylor	(313) 299-0550
*WonderWorld Comics	22391 Ecorse Rd.	Taylor	(313) 292-8697
A To Z Cards & Comics	32659 Ford. Rd.	Garden City	(734) 425-6780
Back To The Past	27512 Schoolcraft	Livonia	(734) 261-5411
Comics Archives, Inc.	25650 Plymouth	Redford	(313) 937-8860
Comic City	42823 Ford. Rd.	Canton	(734) 981-3561
Time Travelers	3277 W. 12 Mile Rd.	Berkley	(248) 548-7213

(Continued from page 7)

tales were still there, but Superman could continue in the face of a more "sophisticated" comic book audience.

Now, of course, Superman will be a major figure in the latest DC epic, the Infinite Crisis, along with Batman and Wonder Woman, who also rightfully hold places of esteem and respect in the DC universe. It's my bet that, a year from now when the Crisis smoke clears, there will be a tall, square-jawed guy with a trademark curl and a set of red and blue pj's standing there, ready to go another 67 years battling evil with a twinkle in his eye. God bless him.

The author and Noel Neill (Lois Lane) at the 2003 Motor City Con.

OZ

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